

Message Text

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PAGE 01 FUKUOK 00048 240510Z

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SUBJECT: FARMERS POLITICAL FERMENT IN KYUSHU

REF: FUKUOKA A-01

SUMMARY. RESENTMENT DIRECTED AGAINST THE BEEF AND CITRUS PORTIONS OF THE USHIBA-STRAUSS COMMUNIQUE ON THE PART OF JAPANESE FARMERS IN KYUSHU REMAINS STRONG AND HAS COMBINED WITH AGGRAVATION OVER GOJ'S RICE PADDY RETRENCHMENT MEASURES AND FEARS THAT RISING YEN VALUE WILL LEAD TO FLOOD OF CHEAP IMPORTED FARM PRODUCTS. END SUMMARY.

1. FIRST REACTION OF KYUSHU AGRICULTURAL CIRCLES TO STRAUSS-USHIBA AGREEMENT WAS SERIES OF ANGRY DEMONSTRATIONS (REF), BUT DURING FEBRUARY FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS CHANGED TACTICS FROM PETITIONING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND HOLDING DEMONSTRATIONS TO ATTEMPTS TO DEVELOP MORE PERMANENT AND EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE TO WHAT THEY SEE AS SERIOUS NEW THREAT. IN NAGASAKI LEADERS OF FARMERS COOPERATIVES MET AND AGREED TO ATTEMPT TO FORM NEW AGRICULTURAL POLITICAL LEAGUE (NOSEIREN) AND WITHDRAW SUPPORT PREVIOUSLY GIVEN TO LDP. COOPERATIVE LEADERS AGREED THAT OFFICIALS OF COOPS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF LDP WILL BE ASKED TO WITHDRAW THEIR PARTY MEMBERSHIPS; NO UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 FUKUOK 00048 240510Z

FURTHER PETITIONS CONCERNING AGRICULTURAL POLICY WILL BE DELIVERED TO LDP OFFICIALS; AND COOP MEMBERS WHO ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF LDP DIETMAN SUPPORTING GROUPS WILL BE ASKED TO RESIGN. NEW NOSEIREN ORGANIZATION WILL HAVE INDIVIDUAL RATHER THAN GROUP MEMBERS AND WILL ATTEMPT TO PUT TOGETHER NATIONAL FARMERS' POLITICAL ORGANIZATION . INAUGURAL MEETING OF NEW ORGANIZATION IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 7.

ORGANIZER AND PRESIDENT OF NEW ORGANIZATION, HIDENORI MATSUMOTO, A MIKAN PRODUCER, HAS MADE VARIOUS INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS ABOUT LDP AND NATIONAL POLITICAL AMBITIONS OF GROUP TO LOCAL PRESS.

2. KYUSHU PRESS AND POLITICAL OBSERVERS (INCLUDING MANY FARMERS THEMSELVES) SEEM SKEPTICAL OF NEW ORGANIZATIONS'S POTENTIAL EFFECTIVENESS OR ABILITY TO ATTRACT ANY PERMANENT FOLLOWING. ORGANIZATION'S MAIN SUPPORT SEEMS LIMITED TO MIKAN GROWERS. IF, HOWEVER, CITRUS IMPORTS AND OTHER CHEAPER IMPORTED FARM PRODUCTS SHOULD COMBINE WITH HEAVY-HANDED MISHANDLING OF PADDY REDUCTION MEASURES, POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT NOSEIREN COULD CAPITALIZE ON SUCH EVENTS TO RUN SEVERAL CANDIDATES IN NAGASAKI PREFECTURE DURING NEXT LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS. DEPENDING ON STATE OF RESENTMENT OF FARMERS AT THAT TIME, ONE OR TWO LDP SEATS IN NAGASAKI'S PREDOMINANTLY RURAL SECOND DISTRICT MIGHT BECOME VICTIMS. LDP PREFECTURAL LEADERS AND GOVERNOR KUBO ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF THIS WORST-CASE SCENARIO AND, WHILE DOWNGRADING IT IN PUBLIC, SEEM TO BE WORKING INTENSELY BEHIND SCENE TO MODERATE GOJ POLICIES IN AGRICULTURAL AREA UNTIL FARMERS CALM DOWN.

3. MEANWHILE IN BEPPU (OITA PREFECTURE) ONGOING SERIES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN PREFECTURAL AND ALL-KYUSHU AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES WITH SOME REPRESENTATION FROM INDUSTRIAL UNIONS HAS BEEN SEARCHING FOR WAY TO LINK FARMERS AND LABOR IN JOINT SPRING STRUGGLE. ALTHOUGH DEPRESSED STATE OF CERTAIN SECTORS OF KYUSHU AGRICULTURE COINCIDES WITH SLUMP IN LOCAL STEEL PRODUCTION, SHIPBUILDING AND UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 FUKUOK 00048 240510Z

OTHER HEAVY INDUSTRIES, OBSERVERS HERE ARE SKEPTICAL OF EFFORT TO COME UP WITH ANY EFFECTIVE LINKAGE FOR AN INDUSTRIAL-AGRICULTURAL SPRING JOINT STRUGGLE MOVEMENT.; FUNDAMENTAL INTERESTS OF TWO GROUPS SEEM FARTHER APART THAN COINCIDENCE OR RHETORIC CAN JOIN. NEVERTHELESS, COMBINATION OF STRAUSS-USHIBA COMMUNIQUE, FEARS REVOLVING AROUND EFFECTS OF YEN REVALUATION, GOJ'S PADDY RETRENCHMENT MEASURES AND EXISTING SLUMP OF IMPORTANT SECTORS OF KYUSHU AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY, HAVE PRODUCED PERIOD OF UNUSUAL FERMENT IN WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN STABLE, HIGHLY CONSERVATIVE REGION OF SOLID SUPPORT FOR LDP. PABST

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